END-TIMES ISSUES



GOD DOESN'T TELL US TO KNOW ALL THE END-TIME DETAILS. HE TELLS US TO BE READY.

AND BEYOND!

#148 Davidic covenant – God brings good out of Israel's sin.

1

WHAT WE'VE SEEN SO FAR:

① **Before creation and time ever existed, God *already* had plans …**
- ✓ **For his people** (everyone who is a genuine follower of God).
- ✓ **For Jesus Christ** (who would make these plans possible).

② **God can take what sinners invent for *sinful* purposes, and turn it into something useful for *righteous* purposes.**
- ✓ **We are referring to things which (last time) we described as "neutral"** – as shown in the categories we described:

HERE
- ○ **It may be "evil"** – something *not capable* of being good. EXAMPLE: Creating an *image* of God.
- ○ **It may be "good"** – but they twist and distort it into evil. EXAMPLE: Doing good deeds, but for the wrong reasons.
- ○ **It may be "neutral"** – capable of being used for good *or* evil. EXAMPLES: a brick, a store, numbers, electricity, dynamite.
  - ***We can also include social structures ("institutions") here.*** *(Last time, we illustrated this with "cities" and "kings.")*

2

TODAY:

- **Issues leading up to the Davidic Covenant.** This covenant will impact:
  - ✓ **Jesus Christ** – Its ultimate fulfillment is in him.
  - ✓ **All who are genuine followers of God** – Our whole eternal future is dependent on what Jesus did in this covenantal role.
    - » What he did is the reason we can have a confident hope in the future… a hope that can influence our perspective on life *even now*.
- **We will see that God can use the *sinful* actions of people to accomplish *good*.**

In addition to the word "king," there are several parallel concepts mentioned in Scripture.
- Rulers, judges, chiefs, princes, leaders, etc. The word "king" does not even occur until Genesis 14 – even though "king-like" people and activities (usually sinful) are mentioned several times before that.

3

GOD as King.

BE AWARE: Our focus is on the "king" concept; but in *both* Testaments, the concept of God as "Judge" occurs more frequently.
- **People tend to not like this!** But that is just the way it is. And when the focus *is* on God/Jesus as "King," it often occurs *within the context of judging*; for *this is one of the things a king does!*

- **Abraham describes God as "the Judge of all the earth" – Genesis 18:25.** This makes sense, since Abraham knew that God had brought judgment at the Great Flood, and the Tower of Babel – both because of people's sins.
- **In Exodus 15:18, we are told that the LORD will "reign forever and ever."** Though the word "king" hasn't yet been used of God (i.e., not mentioned in Scripture), this verse mentions a kingly function: ruling.
- **The first reference in Scripture to God as a "King" occurs in Numbers 23:21.** This is about 600 years after Abraham's statement.

4

HUMAN kings.

- **Adam was to rule** over the earth, *for the glory of God*. But his sin resulted in a devastation that affected all of creation, including all people.
- **After the Fall** (at which time sin entered the world), there have been *no* fully-righteous kings or rulers. The best have had flaws.
- **The early kings and rulers**, mentioned in Scripture, were leaders over communities, cities and regions; and they were nearly all idolatrous and evil. This trend has continued throughout the world – in Israel's time and up to the present.
- **In Israel's history**, there were various leaders – including judges and kings. Many had flaws; none were sinless. Some were quite evil, and led the nation to its apostasy and destruction.
- **Prophetically**, we can expect evil rulers to continue to rule – though we should not encourage it! And we should not be surprised if evil reaches its climax, just before Jesus returns to judge the world.

5

How did Israel get a king?

BEFORE THE NATION EXISTED.

- **At Babel, *all*** the people (except for random individuals) had turned away from the true God. God scattered them across the earth, because of their rebellion; and they became the nations of the world.
  - ✓ These people had their kings and rulers, all in rebellion against God. And they *still* continue this way, to this present day (with varying degrees of rebellion, depending on how much the Bible has influenced their conduct).
- **About 2½ centuries later** (if we base our calculations on the genealogies given in Genesis), God chose an *individual* to become a *new* nation – *not* part of those who were scattered by God.
  - ✓ **This would be a nation of God's own invention**, created for *his own purpose* of fulfilling the promise that was made all the way back in the garden in Eden, when the first two humans fell into sin.
  - ✓ **Through this newly-formed nation**, God would bring the deliverer who would destroy the Serpent that had empowered the snake, and led the human race into sin.

6

TWO THEMES: GOD AS KING; A HUMAN KING.

- **By the time of Moses**, if not sooner, the people recognized that *God* was to be their King. Even though the use of the word "king" is sparse, God was, in every way, *functioning* as the king.
  - ✓ The people, after saying that God would bring them into the promised land, said:

> The LORD will **reign** forever and ever!
> Exodus 15:18 (BSB)

  - ✓ Balaam, the false prophet, when he was overpowered by God, and *forced* to pronounce *God's* prophecy (instead of his own), stated:

> The LORD their God is with them,
> and the shout of **the King** is among them.
> Numbers 23:21b (BSB)

- **Yet even before that,** *God* made statements that seemed to point to a future *human* king over Israel.

- ✓ **God to Abraham:** This prophecy would apply to several of his offspring (who would become "nations"), not just the nation of Israel:

> I will make you exceedingly fruitful; I will make **nations** of you, and **kings** will descend from you.
> Genesis 17:6 (BSB)

- ✓ **God to Sarah:** A similar promise, though slightly more limited. (Abraham had other children; but only Isaac came from Sarah.)

> I will bless her, and she will be the mother of **nations**; **kings** of peoples will descend from her.
> Genesis 17:16b (BSB)

- ✓ **God to Jacob (who was renamed "Israel"):**

> A **nation**—even a company of **nations**—shall come from you, and **kings** shall descend from you.
> Genesis 35:11b (BSB)

Abraham would be ancestor to the **Israelites**, the **Edomites**, the **Ishmaelites** and the **Midianites**. Sarah would be ancestor to the **Israelites** and the **Edomites**. Jacob would be ancestor to the **Israelites** (who would split into *two* nations).

THERE WERE ALSO PROPHECIES ABOUT A HUMAN KING.

- **Jacob's blessing (prophecy) about Judah:** This prophecy points to the tribe from which the future ruler would come. It also mentions the extent of his rule: *over nations*.

> The **scepter** will not depart from **Judah**, nor the **ruler's staff** from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs; **the nations will obey him**.
> Genesis 49:10 (NET)

This is a difficult phrase that is often translated as "until 'Shiloh' comes." It may also refer to receiving *tribute* from other nations.

- **The false prophet Balaam was also forced (by God) to prophecy:**

> [Israel's] **king** will be greater than Agag, and his **kingdom** will be exalted.
> Numbers 24:7 (BSB)

"Agag" is probably a *dynastic title* for Amalekite kings – like "Pharaoh" was a title for Egyptian kings. Centuries later, King Saul would defeat a king who was called "Agag"; but this present passage, spoken by Balaam, would have referred to someone else, presumably a much greater king, who lived in Balaam's day.

- **Another prophecy by Balaam (under God's control):** This is about a ruler who would come in the distant future.

> I see him, but not now;
> I behold him, but not near.
> **A star** will come forth from Jacob,
> and **a scepter** will arise from Israel. …
> **A ruler** will come from Jacob …
> Numbers 24:17a, 19a (BSB)

In Matthew 2:2, the Magi ("wise men") see Jesus' *star*.
In Revelation 22:16, Jesus refers to himself as the "bright morning *star*."

Yes, there was a legitimate reason for expecting that there would someday be a human king over Israel.

- **But when it actually happened …**
  - ✓ The people would be demanding a king for *sinful* reasons.
  - ✓ *It would not be the "ultimate" king that is mentioned in some of these prophecies.* (The first king – the result of *sinful* demands – wouldn't even be from Judah – which Genesis 49:10 mentions.)

A KING FOR THE *WRONG* REASON.

- **As Moses reviewed the Law with the people, just before they entered the promised land,** he reminded (warned) them that they were prone to sin and rebellion.

> Understand, then, that it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for **you are a stiff-necked people**.
> Deuteronomy 9:6 (BSB)

> For **I know how rebellious and stiff-necked you are**. If you are **already rebelling** against the LORD while I am still alive, **how much more will you rebel** after my death!
> Deuteronomy 31:27 (BSB)

- **God knew that they would someday demand a king *for the wrong reasons*.** God would allow it; but he gave them some regulations and warnings. ***God has plans… but note their wrong motives:***

> [When] you say, "Let us set a king over us **like all the nations around us**," …
> Deuteronomy 17:14b (BSB); the regulations are in v. 15-20.

- **When they *did* demand a king, both Samuel and God recognized that it was being done in rebellion.**

> So all the elders of Israel [said,]
> "… Now appoint a king to judge us **like all the other nations**."
> … their demand was **displeasing in the sight of Samuel**;
> so he prayed to the LORD.
> And the LORD said to Samuel, "… **they have rejected Me as their king**.
> Just as they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, **forsaking Me and serving other gods**, **so they are doing to you**.
> 1 Samuel 8:4a, 5b, 6b, 7a,c, 8 (BSB)

- **After Samuel warned them that there would be horrible consequences; the people *still* did not relent.**

> Nevertheless, **the people refused to listen to Samuel**. "No!" they said. "We must have a king over us. Then **we will be like all the other nations**, with a king to judge us, to go out before us, and to fight our battles."
> 1 Samuel 8:19-20 (BSB)

How did things get to this point?

- **Ultimately, it was because they *constantly* kept rejecting God – from the day God brought them out of Egypt.**

> And the LORD said to Samuel, "... **they have rejected Me as their king. Just as they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt** until this day, **forsaking Me and serving other gods**, ...
>
> 1 Samuel 8:7a,c, 8a (BSB)

But there were also *other* influencing factors.

① They could have been aware of the various prophecies that had been made, down through the ages.

- ✓ But their perception may have been distorted, since they tended to ignore the Bible. If they appealed to such prophecies, it would have probably been done for the wrong reasons: focusing on the *human* king, and ignoring *God*.
- ✓ (Perhaps we could compare this with the Jews of Jesus' day, who wanted a king, but for the wrong reasons.)

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② They would have been aware of the various deliverances from enemies that we read about in the book of the Judges.

- ✓ God rescued them, whenever they repented of their sin. But over-all, there was a tendency to **focus on the *human leader*** – the "judge" who led them into battle, the way a king would have done.
- ✓ During the time of the judges, the people had an increasing desire for a *human* king, as illustrated here:

> Then the Israelites said to Gideon, "**Rule over us**—you and your son and grandson—**for you have saved us from the hand of Midian**."
>
> But Gideon replied, "**I will not rule over you**, nor will my son. **The LORD shall rule over you**."
>
> Judges 8:22-23 (BSB)

Even after *God* had just provided a *miraculous* victory, the people were focusing on Gideon, instead of God! And after Gideon's death, two cities made one of his sons a king – to their demise (chapter 9).

14

③ As the people continued to abandon the true God, and society became increasingly chaotic and dangerous, they began to view a human king as their *only* solution.

- ✓ Judges 17-21 describe this horrible, chaotic, morally out-of-control situation. Having rejected God as their king, it left them in a void – with nothing to restrain their sin.
- ✓ Even when they looked to God for guidance, their response was defective, with horrible consequences. (Compare Judges 20:28 to 21:3.)
- ✓ Here is a summary of this period in Israel's history, as described in this section of the book. Having rejected *God's* authority, each person became *his own* authority. And to them, a *human* king was the only solution:

> In those days there was **no king** in Israel; **everyone did what was right in his own eyes**.
>
> Judges 17:6; repeated in 21:25 (BSB)

> In those days Israel had **no king**.
>
> Judges 18:1a and 19:1a (NIV)

15

④ Finally, things reached the point where they openly *demanded* that they be given a human king. They didn't want to rely on God.

- ✓ They made this demand to Samuel; and God let them have a king.
- ✓ **In 1 Samuel 10**, we read that *God* chose Saul; but in reality, he was giving them the type of king *they* wanted – based on physical characteristics (height, etc.).

> ... when [Saul] stood among the people, he was a head taller than any of the others.
>
> Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see **the one the LORD has chosen**? There is no one like him among all the people."
>
> And all the people shouted, "**Long live the king!**"
>
> 1 Samuel 10:23b-24 (BSB)

- ✓ **Chapter 12** tells us that it was the type of king that *they* (not God) wanted. And because of this – and the fact that Saul was *just like* the people, *not* relying on God – his reign was a disaster.
- ✓ Here is the chapter 12 passage... ↓

16

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS AND THEIR UNFAITHFULNESS.

- **Samuel pointed out how God was always faithful to his promises...**
  - ✓ He then contrasted God's faithfulness to their unwillingness to trust him – and their demand for a human king.

> **[The LORD] delivered you** from the hands of your enemies on every side, and you dwelt securely.
>
> But when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was moving against you, **you said to me, 'No, we must have a king to rule over us'—even though the LORD your God was your king**.
>
> Now here is **the king you have chosen, the one you requested**. Behold, the LORD has placed a king over you.
>
> 1 Samuel 12:11b-13 (BSB)

- **God then demonstrated his wrath for their sin**, by destroying their wheat harvest with a severe thunderstorm.

> "... so that you will know and see **what a great evil you have committed** in the sight of the LORD **by asking for a king**."
>
> 1 Samuel 12:17 (BSB)

17

EVEN SO, GOD WOULD *STILL* BE WILLING TO PROTECT THEM.

- **But they would need to be willing to follow the LORD – just like they needed to, *before* they had a king.** Also Samuel would continue to pray for them and teach them the ways of God.

> "Do not be afraid," Samuel replied. "**Even though you have committed all this evil, do not turn aside from following the LORD**, but **serve the LORD with all your heart. Do not turn aside after worthless things** that cannot profit you or deliver you, for they are empty. Indeed, for the sake of His great name, **the LORD will not abandon His people, because He was pleased to make you His own**.
>
> As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you. And I will continue to teach you the good and right way.
>
> Above all, **fear the LORD and serve Him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things He has done for you. But if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will be swept away**."
>
> 1 Samuel 12:20-25 (BSB)

18

What if they chose to NOT trust God?
Could the king save them?

- **Even *with* a king, their survival would *continue* to be dependent on whether or not they trusted *God*.**
  - ✓ **If they took their eyes off God,** the king would not be able to save them. Moses warned them: *God would oppose them*, and would *himself* send them into exile.

> The LORD will bring **you and the king you appoint to a nation neither you nor your fathers have known**, and there you will worship other gods—gods of wood and stone.
>
> Deuteronomy 28:36 (BSB)

  - ✓ ***In the end, this is exactly what happened.***
    - » It's the reason the Northern Kingdom was sent into exile – 2 Kings 17:7-23. (Part of this also applies to Judah.)
    - » It's the reason the Southern Kingdom (Judah) was sent into exile – 2 Chronicles 36:15-17.

19

Where does David fit in all this?

- **King Saul proved to be *just like the people* – unwilling to trust and obey God. So God would NOT let his kingdom remain forever.**

> "You have done a foolish thing," Samuel said. "**You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you**; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. But now **your kingdom will not endure**; …"
>
> 1 Samuel 13:13-14a (NIV)

- **Instead, God would choose someone who – though not sinless – would be willing to trust and obey him.**

> "… the LORD has sought out **a man after his own heart** and **appointed him ruler of his people**, because you have not kept the LORD's command."
>
> 1 Samuel 13:14b (NIV)

This person would be David! God would turn the people's *evil* desire for a king into something *good*!

20

In anticipation for what comes next,
we will close with a prophecy.

- Given by Samuel's mother, Hannah…
- On the day she presented Samuel to the temple, to be dedicated to God for life…
- As part of her expression of joy and praise to God, who had enabled her to have a child…
- Probably an allusion to the prophecies given early in Israel's history…
- **Words that she might not have even realized were prophetic**…
- Something she would not live to see fulfilled…

> **The LORD will judge** the ends of the earth
> and will give power to **His king**.
> He will exalt the horn of **His anointed**."
>
> 1 Samuel 2:10b (BSB)

She never saw it happen; but what she said *would* begin to be fulfilled – in spite of the people's sin – just a few decades after she said it.
This fulfillment is connected to the Davidic Covenant.

21

OUR MISSION (for today) !

If we have chosen to follow Jesus, *HOW can we apply this to ourselves?*
We're not David… but we *are* God's people!
There *are* parallels between *these* events and *our lives*. For instance:

- ✓ **Scripture contained promises about a coming *righteous* king.**
  Scripture has promises that apply to *us*.
- ✓ **Many things happened in *Israel* that seemed to go against those promises – including much evil.**
  Much happens in *our lives* that seems to go against God's promises – including much evil. Things often make no sense in our lives.
- ✓ **Back then, God used *all* that happened, in order to accomplish what he had promised.**
  At the present time, we can trust God to use *all* that happens, in order to accomplish what he has promised.

22

We can know it is true!

> And **we know that God works all things together for the good of those who love Him**, who are called according to His purpose.
>
> Romans 8:28 (BSB)

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